DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 574 SO 017 417

AUTHOR Tucker, Jan L.
TITLE Citizenship Education through the Eyes of Elementary School Principals.
PUB DATE 19 Jun 86
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Social Science Education Consortium (Palo Alto, CA, June 19, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizenship Education; Civics; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Curriculum; *Principals; Public Affairs Education; *Social Studies

ABSTRACT

Citizenship education is commonly accepted as the ultimate goal of the social studies, yet the professional preparation of school administrators devotes little attention to civic learning. The status of citizenship education as reported by elementary school principals in the Dade County, Florida public schools was investigated. The first major finding was that there were major differences in the priorities assigned by the elementary school principals to each of the four dimensions of citizenship education. The moral and ethical dimension and the dimension of interpersonal understandings were rated consistently as high priorities whereas the enculturation and citizenship participation dimensions received much lower ratings overall. The second major finding was that the conduct of citizenship education in the schools was overwhelmingly perceived by the elementary principals as comprised of extra-curricular activities. The principals showed barely any recognition of the role of the formal social studies curricula in achieving the goals of citizenship education. The results of this study appear to confirm the claim by Shaver (1985) that elementary school principals did not have sufficient understanding of the knowledge base in the social sciences as it related to citizenship education to provide more than the rudiments of a citizenship education program. (BZ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED275574

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH THE EYES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Jan L. Tucker
Professor, Social Studies Education
College of Education
Florida International University
Miami, Florida 33199

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Barbara Bell-Cruz and Maria Fernandez

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

JAN L. TUCKER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Social Science Education Consortium Stanford University, June 19, 1986.

SO 017 417

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Statement of the Problem

Citizenship education is commonly accepted as being the ultimate goal of the social studies. For example, the Essentials of the Social Studies (1982), published by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), is introduced with this statement, "Citizen participation in public life is essential to the health of our democratic system. Effective social studies programs help prepare young people who can identify, understand, and work to solve the problems that face our increasingly diverse nation and interdependent world." Indeed, the social studies profession makes a privileged claim on citizenship education: "Social studies education," according to the NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines, "provides the only structured school or community focus for the preparation of citizens." Yet, is anyone else paying attention to this claim? Especially, are school principals paying attention?

The National Task Force on Citizenship Education (1977) argued that "the school principal is the key person in establishing a positive climate necessary for effective citizenship education in the school, and the degree of commitment by the principal usually determines the quality of the civic education program."* However, according to Shaver (1985), the professional preparation of school administrators devotes little attention to civic learning.

Thus, on the one hand, we find citizenship education posited as the major outcome of the social studies. On the other hand, school principals are viewed as key players whose training is inadequate for the responsibility.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the status and to evaluate the priorities of citizenship education, as reported by elementary school principals in the Dade County Public Schools. Social studies educators might hope to find

---

*Also, see Remy and Wagstaff "Principals Can Exert a Leadership Role in Citizenship Education," NASSP Bulletin (1982).

social studies instruction being important in the minds of principals as they are asked to think about citizenship education in their own schools.

The role of an elementary school principal in instructional leadership is very important. Typically, an elementary school principal is more "in charge" than is a junior high school or a senior high school principal where the size and scope of the school operation require a greater delegation of authority. Also, the views of elementary principals are important because of the key role of elementary instruction for building a foundation in citizenship education and because of the somewhat nebulous status of social studies at the elementary level.

Sample Selection

Elementary school principals were randomly selected from a current roster of all elementary schools in the Dade County Public Schools. In order to obatin a cross-sectional geographic representation of the opinions of elementary school principals, the sample was stratified across the four administrative areas of the Dade County Public Schools. The sample size was 40% of the total of 174 elementary schools. Accordingly, the survey instrument was mailed to 70 elementary school principals.*

Instrument

The Citizenship Education Survey instrument developed for this research was taken from Goodlad's A Place Called School (1984). Goodlad identified

*The original survey also was sent to middle/junior and senior high school principals and the data collected but the resulting N of 16 was too small for statistical confidence. A preliminary comparison of the responses from elementary (1-6) and secondary (7-12) principals showed no difference.

four major goals for schooling in the United States: academic; vocational; social, civic, and cultural; and personal. It is the social, civic, and cultural goal cluster that provided the basis for the research instrument. Although Goodlad did not identify this cluster as citizenship education per se, his framework provides a reasonably good fit with the literature related to the outcomes of citizenship education. His cluster of social, civic, and cultural goals are further divided into four dimensions. These four dimensions are: interpersonal understandings, citizenship participation, enculturation, and moral and ethical character.

Each of the four dimensions contain specific standards that formed the response items for the instrument, 25 in all. The standards are:

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION SURVEY

Social, Civic, and Cultural Standards

Interpersonal understandings:

- Develop a knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society.
- Develop an understanding of how members of a family function under different family patterns as well as within one's own family.
- Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups.
- Develop the ability to identify with and advance the goals and concerns of others.
- Learn to form productive and satisfying relations with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, consideration, and caring.
- Develop a concern for humanity and an understanding of international relations.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of cultures different from one's own.

Citizenship participation

- Develop historical perspective.
- Develop knowledge of the basic workings of the government.
- Develop a willingness to participate in the political life of the nation and the community.
- Develop a commitment to the values of liberty, government by consent of the governed, representational government, and one's responsibility for the welfare of all.

Citizenship participation: (continued)

- Develop an understanding of the interrelationships among complex organizations and agencies in a modern society, and learn to act in accordance with it.
- Exercise the democratic right to dissent in accordance with personal conscience.
- Develop economic consumer skills necessary for making informed choices that enhance one's quality of life.
- Develop an understanding of the basic interdependence of the biological and physical resources of the environment.
- Develop the ability to act in light of this understanding of interdependence.

Enculturation:

- Develop insight into the values and characteristics, including language, of the civilization of which one is a member.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of one's cultural heritage and become familiar with the achievements of the past that have inspired and influenced humanity.
- Develop understanding of the manner in which traditions from the past are operative today and influence the direction and values of society.
- Understand and adopt the norms, values, and traditions of the groups of which one is a member.
- Learn how to apply the basic principles and concepts of the fine arts and humanities to the appreciation of the aesthetic contributions of other cultures.

Moral and ethical character:

- Develop the judgment to evaluate events and phenomena as good or evil.
- Develop a commitment to truth and values.
- Learn to utilize values in making choices.
- Develop moral integrity.
- Develop an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct.

In the survey instrument, the four dimensions, i.e., interpersonal understandings, citizenship participation, enculturation, and moral and ethical character, were eliminated and only the 25 standards were listed to avoid any grouping in the minds of the respondents.

The elementary school principals were asked to rate each of the 25 standards as either "high priority," "medium priority," "low priority," or

"not a priority" for their school. In addition, they were asked to indicate by way of example what they had done in their school to promote citizenship.

The responses were indicated on a "scantron" sheet using a #2 lead pencil and the examples were individually written in by the respondents. A cover letter accompanied the survey providing the rationale for the project. It was signed by the Dean of the College of Education of Florida International University, by the Superintendent of the Dade County Public Schools, and by the Director of the Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies at Florida International University. For preliminary screening and trouble shooting, the survey was administered to members of a graduate level course at Florida International University and to selected school principals. The instrument was modified on the basis of this feedback.

Procedures

In October 1985, after having been approved by the district's office of accountability, the Citizenship Education Survey was sent to 70 of the 174 elementary school principals in the Dade County Public Schools. The principals were allowed to respond anonymously. The surveys and envelopes were encoded with a random set of numbers to facilitate data analysis and follow-up in the event follow-up was needed. The principals were given approximately two weeks to complete the surveys and mail them back in the self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Reminders were phoned to schools not responding by the initial date. As the questionnaires came back, they were logged and recorded by educational level and administrative area.

The return of 47 useable survey instruments from elementary principals represents 67.1% of the elementary school sample and is 27.0% of the total 174 elementary schools in the Dade County Public Schools. This comparatively high rate of return combined with the random, stratified sample provides a reasonable degree of confidence in the data, with the important exception that the study cannot be generalized beyond the Dade County Public Schools.

Findings

There are two major findings in this study. The first major finding is that there were major differences in the priorities assigned by the elementary school principals to each of the four dimensions of Citizenship Education. Looking at the data in a macro sense, the average percentage of elementary school principals rating the standards within the Moral and Ethical dimension as a high priority was 74.5%. The dimension of Interpersonal Understandings was rated as a high priority by an average of 58.4%. The Enculturation and Citizenship Participation dimensions were rated as high priority by only 41.4% and 39.0% respectively (see Tables 1 and 2). The second major finding is that conduct of citizenship education in the schools was overwhelmingly perceived by the elementary principals as comprised of extra-curricular activities. Only two principals identified the formal social studies curriculum as a means to achieve citizenship education outcomes. Each major finding is discussed in turn.

Priorities of Citizenship Education (Goodlad's Social, Civic, and Cultural Goals)

At least 75% of all reporting elementary school principals identified five (5) of the 25 standards for citizenship education as a high priority. These five (5) high priority standards were:

- (89.4%) Learn to form productive and satisfying relations with others based upon respect, trust, cooperation, and caring (Interpersonal Understandings).
- (87.2) Develop a commitment to truth and values (Moral and Ethical Character).
- (83.0) Develop moral integrity and an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct (Moral and Ethical Character).
- (83.0) Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups (Interpersonal Understandings).
- (78.7) Learn to utilize values in making choices (Moral and Ethical Character).*

At the other end of the rating scale, at least 25% of all reporting elementary school principals identified five (5) of the 25 standards for citizenship education as either a low priority or not a priority. These five low and no priority standards were:

- (42.5) Develop an understanding of the interrelationships among complex organizations and agencies in a modern society, and learn to act in accordance with it (Citizenship Participation).
- (29.8) Learn how to apply the basic principles and concepts of the fine arts and humanities to the appreciation of the aesthetic contributions of other cultures (Enculturation).
- (29.8) Develop a knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society (Interpersonal Understandings).
- (25.5) Develop historical perspective (Citizenship Participation).
- (25.5) Develop a willingness to participate in the political life of the nation and the community (Citizenship Participation).

Given the emphasis found in the social studies literature on participation as an important component of citizenship education, the comparatively low priority assigned by the elementary school principals to citizenship participation raises an issue from a social studies point of view. Social studies educators are likely to argue for a greater balance among the standards, with more emphasis being accorded the citizenship participation component of citizenship education.

Three of the standards in the citizenship participation dimension stand out in terms of the principals' low ratings. More than two of every five elementary principals rated as a low or no priority the understanding of the relationships

*See Table 2 for complete report on all 25 standards

among complex organizations and agencies in a modern society and learning to act in accordance with that understanding. One in four principals believed that either a low or a no priority should be given to developing historical perspective and to developing willingness to participate in the political life of the nation and the community.

A number of explanations may account for this comparatively low regard for three of the primary objectives of the social studies. One explanation may be that the pressure to acquire the basics of education at the elementary level tends to crowd out other priorities such as social studies that could be delayed to a higher level of education. There is only a finite amount of time allocated to schooling and difficult choices must be made.

Also, the examples provided by the principals indicate that more participation may be going on in the schools than they recognize. In other words, they may simply have overlooked the connection between the standard and the exemplars in the school. If so, this would indicate that principals are not prepared to see the connections; and those who cannot see the connections are unlikely to assume a leadership position in fostering a more active climate for citizenship education.

But other explanations may be equally valid, explanations that go more to the heart of the social studies. Developing an understanding of the interrelationships among complex organizations .... and developing a historical perspective may be desirable but unfeasible because of the lack of teachers who are capable of translating these fundamental social science principles into the learning experiences of elementary students. Or, the absence of emphasis upon citizenship participation may reflect a view that such activities are too difficult to manage, or even too controversial in some cases.

The study did not provide enough information to do more than speculate about the reasons for the low rating of the citizenship participation dimension. In-depth follow up interviews are needed. However, in the broadest sense the study points to the need of a greater attention to the role of the elementary school in developing citizen competence. The data compel one to ask whether the comparatively low priority assigned by elementary school principals to citizenship participation may have some bearing on the overall disinterest demonstrated by adult Americans toward the civic culture. At the very least, the data indicate a need for social studies educators to become more articulate and forceful about the potential relationships between the goals of the social studies and the outcomes of citizenship education in the elementary school.

Lack of Emphasis on the Social Studies:

When asked to indicate by way of example what they had done in their school to promote citizenship, 15 elementary principals failed to give a single example. The remaining 32 presented a total of 136 examples. Only two (2) of the 136 examples dealt explicitly with the social studies curriculum. Ten (10) examples were references to programs that in the DCPS are tied administratively to the office of the social studies supervisor including law-related education, character education, and global education. Thus, the social studies curriculum was mentioned either directly or indirectly a total of 12 times or 7.9% of the total of 151 possibilities.

By far, the greatest concentration of examples came in the area of extra-curricular activities including awards for "good deeds"; student council; charity and relief drives for United Way, Hunger in Ethiopia; Crime Watch; Safety Patrol; and guest speakers. Only one principal spoke of conducting simulated political campaigns and elections (see Table 3).

The overwhelming conclusion is that elementary school principals in the Dade County Public Schools do not see the formal social studies curriculum as a means for achieving the standards of citizenship education as defined by the Citizenship Education Survey. In addition, there is a sense of the schools promoting the idea of community service through the United Way, famine relief, Red Cross and Crime Watch but not doing much to introduce students to the process and value of democratic political participation through mock elections and decision-making simulations. Overall, the citizenship education standards related to political socialization are given far more emphasis than the standards

related to political understanding and participation. The emphasis on the former over the latter at the elementary school level is not surprising. But the margin of difference may provide the grist for discussion about a more appropriate balance, especially in view of the emphasis of the social studies upon social participation. (Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines, 1979).

Discussion

The results of this study appear to confirm the claim by Shaver (1985) that school principals do not have sufficient understanding of the knowledge base in the social sciences as it relates to citizenship education to provide more than the rudiments of a citizenship education program at the elementary grade level. Lacking this knowledge base, it can be expected that schools will fall back on the tried and true approaches, which others may describe as flat and unnecessarily cautious. In the absence of a knowledge base, it may be too much to expect an elementary school principal to exert rigorous leadership in program development in citizenship education.

Social studies educators will be disappointed to learn that the elementary school principals showed barely any recognition of the role of the formal social studies curriculum in achieving the goals of citizenship education. If a similar picture pertains throughout the United States, we can conclude one of the following: (1) Social studies is not being taught in sufficient quantity to warrant recognition by elementary school principals as an important vehicle for citizenship education; (2) Even if social studies is being taught in sufficient quantity, elementary school principals may not view the social studies as an appropriate vehicle for achieving the goals of citizenship education; elementary school principals may have a different conception of the social studies

and therefore fail to make the conceptual and practical linkage between social studies instruction and citizenship education; or (3) Social studies educators nationally and locally may not be conveying to elementary school principals the natural linkages between the field and citizenship education.

Conclusion

If the social studies profession is to continue placing citizenship education as the ultimate purpose of the field and if school principals are key players in developing successful civic education programs, then the knowledge and perception gaps between social studies educators and elementary school principals indicated by this study suggest a need for these two groups to work cooperatively at all levels, from the building-level through the national organizations, to conceptualize, design, and implement effective programs in citizenship education at the elementary level.

References

Butts, R. Freeman (1982) "International Human Rights and Civic Education," in International Human Rights, Society, and the Schools, Bulletin No. 68, Washington, D.C.: NCSS.

Goodlad, John I. (1984) A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Remy, Richard C. and Lonnie H. Wagstaff (1982) "Principals Can Exert a Leadership Role in Citizenship Education," NASSP Bulletin 66: 454 (May) 55-62.

Shaver, James P. (1985) "The Social Sciences and the Civic Education of Teachers and Administrators," in Civic Learning for Teachers: Capstone for Educational Reform, A. H. Jones, ed., Ann Arbor, Michigan: Prakken Publications, 73-83.

National Council for the Social Studies (1982) Essentials of the Social Studies. Washington, D.C.: NCSS.

National Council for the Social Studies (1979) "Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines," Social Education, April, 261-278.

Table 1

High Priority Preferences of Elementary School Principals

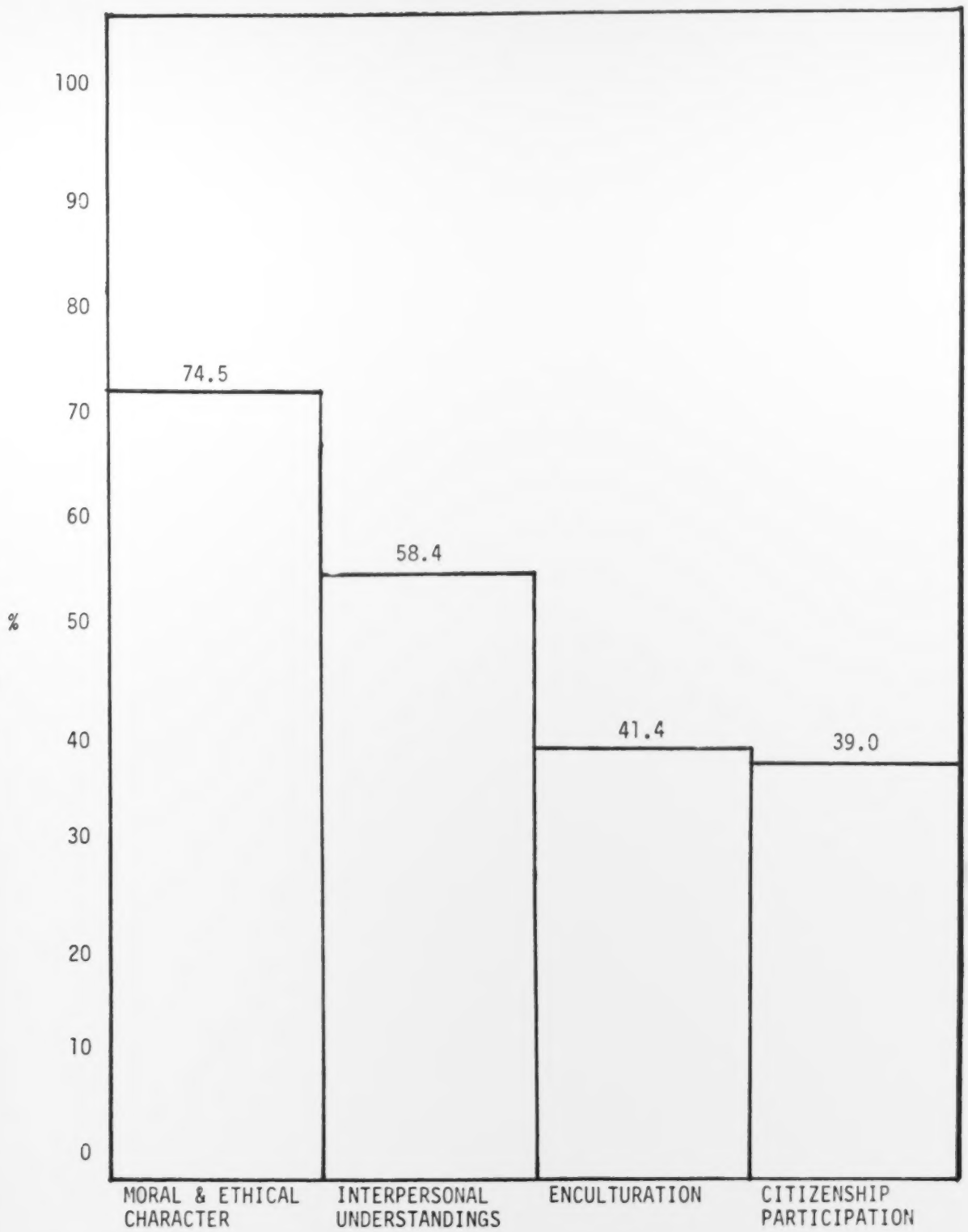

Table 7

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PRIORITY RATINGS
FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

DIMENSIONS AND STANDARDS	RATING PERCENTAGES HIGH	MED.	LOW	N.A.P.*
MORAL AND ETHICAL CHARACTER DIMENSION				
Standards				
23: Develop a commitment to truth and values.	87.2%	6.4%	6.4%	0.0%
25: Develop moral integrity and an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct.	83.0	12.8	2.1	2.1
24: Learn to utilize values in making choices.	78.7	14.9	4.3	2.1
22: Develop the judgement to evaluate events and phenomena as good or evil.	48.9	29.8	14.9	6.4
	74.5	16.0	6.9	2.7 **
INTERPERSONAL UNDERSTANDINGS DIMENSION				
Standards				
5: Learn to form productive and satisfying relations with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, consideration, and caring.	89.4	8.5	2.1	0.0
3: Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups.	83.0	14.9	2.1	0.0
7: Develop an understanding and appreciation of cultures different from one's own.	72.3	25.5	2.1	0.0
6: Develop a concern for humanity and an understanding of international relations.	53.2	31.9	10.6	4.3
2: Develop an understanding of how members of a family function under different family patterns as well as within one's own family.	44.7	42.6	8.5	4.3
4: Develop the ability to identify with and advance the goals and concerns of others.	36.2	53.2	4.3	6.4
1: Develop a knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society.	29.8	40.4	14.9	14.9
	58.4	31.0	6.4	4.3

*N.A.P. means Not A Priority.
(The goals are reported under each category in descending order of their high priority rating percentages.)
**Average percentages for the entire dimension

DIMENSIONS AND STANDARDS	RATING PERCENTAGES HIGH	MED.	LOW	N.A.P.*
ENCULTURATION DIMENSION				
Standards				
17: Develop an insight into the values and characteristics, including language, of the civilization of which one is a member.	63.8	25.5	8.5	2.1
18: Develop an awareness and understanding of one's cultural heritage and become familiar with the achievements of the past that have inspired and influenced humanity.	57.4	34.0	6.4	2.1
20: Understand and adopt the norms, values, and traditions of the groups of which one is a member.	38.3	40.4	21.3	0.0
19: Develop understanding of the manner in which traditions from the past are operative today and influence the direction and values of society.	30.4	47.8	19.6	2.2
24: Learn how to apply the basic principles and concepts of the fine arts and humanities to the appreciation of the aesthetic contributions of other cultures.	17.0	53.2	25.5	4.3
	41.4	40.2	16.3	2.1**
CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION DIMENSION				
11: Develop a commitment to the values of liberty, government by consent of the governed, representational government, and one's responsibility for the welfare of all.	68.1	19.1	12.8	0.0
14: Develop economic and consumer skills necessary for making informed choices that enhance one's quality of life.	59.6	36.2	2.1	2.1
9: Develop knowledge of the basic workings of the government.	42.6	51.1	6.4	0.0
13: Exercise the democratic right to dissent in accordance with personal conscience.	40.4	44.7	12.8	2.1
8: Develop historical perspective.	38.3	36.2	23.4	2.1
15: Develop an understanding of the basic interdependence of the biological and physical resources of the environment.	34.0	51.1	12.8	2.1
16: Develop the ability to act in light of this understanding of interdependence.	25.5	57.4	14.9	2.1
10: Develop a willingness to participate in the political life of the nation and the community.	25.5	48.9	17.0	8.5
12: Develop an understanding of the interrelationships among complex organizations and agencies in a modern society, and learn to act in accordance with it.	17.0	40.4	31.9	10.6
	39.0	42.8	14.9	3.3

*N.A.P. means Not A Priority.
**Average percentages for the entire dimension

Table 3
Examples of Citizenship Education Activities
in Elementary Schools

1.	Student/Citizen of the Week/Day/Year Exemplary citizen is chosen and is recognized in front of the student body.	64%
2.	Citizen and Character Education Development of positive character and ethical traits.	39%
3.	Global Awareness/Cultural Intercommunication Exploration of other cultures and countries; student realizes that the entire world is interconnected and dependent on each other; Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Week, Octoberfest.	36%
4.	Community Service School/Safety Patrol: Students help others cross streets, board buses; Crime Watch Program: Reporting of Infractions committed in and around school.	27%
5.	Student Council Governmental body comprised of students, elected by same, working in conjunction with teachers and administrators.	24%
6.	Relief for Poor, Victims of Calamities, etc. a. United Way b. Ethiopia Hunger Project c. Red Cross d. Food baskets for Thanksgiving, Christmas	15%
7.	Teachers of Tomorrow	10%
8.	Officer Friendly Program Teaches about law enforcement and the role of the citizen.	6%
9.	P.T.S.A. Parent-Teacher-Student Association	6%